

International *Ilex* Cultivar Registration

By Jim Resch
Holly Registration Chair

2-23 *Ilex* × ‘Nancy’

Female

Registered: January 13, 2023

William Cannon

2081 Main Street, Brewster, Massachusetts 02631

This selection originated as an open-pollinated seedling in the extensive holly collection of William Cannon in Brewster, Massachusetts, around 2012. The parentage of the plant is unknown, but it bears a strong resemblance to the *Ilex* × *latifolia* hybrid ‘Elizabeth Coleman’, which also grows in the collection and has given rise to numerous seedlings over the years. Mr. Cannon has grown the plant in his collection since its discovery, and named it ‘Nancy’ after his wife, Nancy Cannon.

This original ‘Nancy’ is an upright, narrowly conical evergreen tree, about 3.0 m (10 ft) tall and 1.8 m (6 ft) wide after 10 years. The plant displays a horizontal branching habit. New leader growth has been about 30 cm (12 in) annually.

The leaves are stiff with a coriaceous texture. They are oval, with the largest leaves up to 7.7 cm (3.0 in) long and 3.9 cm (1.5 in) wide. The bases are rounded. In side view, the margins are flat. In top view, the margins are coarsely serrate and spinose, typically with 3, though occasionally up to 5, small spines per side. These marginal spines, especially those nearer the apex, are somewhat forward-facing. Apices are acute, with a tip spine of 1 mm (0.04 in). Petioles are 4 mm (0.16 in) long. Upper leaf surfaces are dark green, Green Group N137, and quite glossy, while lower leaf surfaces are dull, Yellow-Green Group 144B (Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart, 2007).

The plant produces axillary, pistillate flowers on second-year wood in late April to early May in Zone 7, concurrent with *Ilex aquifolium*, *I.* x

koehneana, and *I. x meserveae* hybrids. These enlarge after blooming to form heavy clusters of fruit. These are rounded in side view, and rounded in cross section, 8 mm (0.31 in) long and 8 mm (0.31 in) wide, on peduncles of up to 11 mm (0.43 in). Ripened fruits are a bright red color, Red 44A.

Propagation may be accomplished from semi-hardwood cuttings in late summer at ambient temperature, or in the fall with bottom heat. Plants have been available from the originator, and also from Jim Resch, who propagated a number of plants in 2019 from Mr. Cannon's cutting



Ilex × 'Nancy' voucher specimen 1,
January 15, 2023.

Jim Resch

Ilex × 'Nancy' rooted cutting,
February 5, 2020.



wood. Hardiness has been established in Zone 7, but has not been demonstrated elsewhere as of this time.

‘Nancy’ was selected for its extremely heavy crops of red fruit, as well as its attractively dark green, glossy foliage. Its foliage closely resembles ‘Elizabeth Coleman’, and differs only subtly from that plant in a side-by-side comparison. The leaves of ‘Nancy’ are slightly smaller, and less broad, than those of ‘Elizabeth Coleman’, and the upper leaf surfaces are slightly darker and glossier. More significantly, ‘Nancy’ is a much heavier fruiter than ‘Elizabeth Coleman’ when grown in the same collection. In addition, the ripened fruits of ‘Nancy’ are slightly more orange-red (Red 44A) than those of ‘Elizabeth Coleman’ (Red 45A).

The standard specimen is deposited in the herbarium of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. 20002.



Ilex × ‘Nancy’ fruiting cluster,
January 15, 2023.

Jim Resch